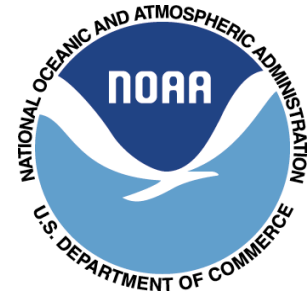


**Evaluation Findings  
for the  
Georgia Coastal Management Program  
from  
January 1998 through April 2001**

December 2001



Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management  
National Ocean Service  
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
United States Department of Commerce



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### A. OVERVIEW

Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972 (CZMA), as amended, requires NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) to conduct periodic evaluations of coastal management program implementation. This review examined how the State of Georgia has implemented and enforced the Georgia Coastal Management Program (GCMP), addressed the coastal management needs addressed in section 303(2)(A) through (K) of the CZMA, and adhered to the terms and conditions of the NOAA financial assistance awards the TCMP received between January 1998 through April 2001.

### B. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The Evaluation Team documented a number of areas where the GCMP improved its management of Georgia's coastal resources. These include:

- 1. Building Relationships With Relevant Institutions.** Development of a close working relationship with the research and academic communities of the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia Southern, University of Georgia Marine Extension Service, NOAA Grays Reef, Sea Grant and others, has led to a strengthening of program implementation throughout its first and formative years and provides the underpinning for future program advancement. In this relationship the scientific community has successfully taken the position of being "honest brokers" to present information in an unbiased way. This has served to bolster GCMP positions and point out areas where the program should extend more effort.
- 2. Building Relationships With National Ocean Service Programs.** In addition to the development of supportive relationships with the scientific communities above, the GCMP has evolved a close working relationship with the National Ocean Service (NOS) programs at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) and Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve (SINERR) and the NOAA Sea Grant program. Sea Grant supports research, education and outreach and GCMP sits on project review selection panels and works to fund worthy projects that do not receive Sea Grant funding. Sea Grant is on GCMP advisory committees and GCMP sits on Sea Grant advisory committees.

3. **Coastal Incentive Grant\$.** At least 60 % of the funds received under the CZMA are passed through to local grants or research institutions. Funding is to projects which both provide access to coastal resources and assures protection from improper uses or correction of environmentally negative impacts. In some cases the grants provide “seed” money to projects which will evolve over time. The Coastal Advisory Council (CAC) provides guidance and has established the theme of “coastal water-related resources” with seven focus areas.
4. **Public Health Monitoring.** Although not a water quality management agency, the GCMP has developed a water quality monitoring program which includes 118 sites covering all sounds and rivers. In 2001, 50 additional sites were added to be comprehensively monitored to a standard set of criteria with the goal of developing trend data. The intent of this effort is to fill in the void of the lack of data so the the GCMP can carry out its own mission. One benefit of the information is that beach data is available on the WEB to identify beach closures, provide general information regarding island beaches, and give directions to the beaches and suggestions for their enjoyment. The information may be accessed at [www.cleanup.org](http://www.cleanup.org) on earthnet 911 and is updated weekly.
5. **Georgia’s Coastal ARK.** Sailing the roadways of coastal Georgia in a flurry of environmental activity is Georgia's very own and very special CoastalArk. The only one of its kind in Georgia, this 30 foot mobile classroom uses the power of state-of-the-art technology to bring ecological information and outreach efforts to coastal residents of the Peach State. Housed at the Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division in Brunswick, Georgia and staffed by biologists, the Ark is set to visit communities in the eleven county service area which is served by the Coastal Resources Division.
6. **Coastal Hazards Information System (COHIS).** The GCMP has been working with NOAA, Coastal Programs Division to develop a Coastal Hazards Information System - a disaster planning and response system which uses the latest applications of Geographic Information System (GIS), Global Positioning System (GPS) and ArcIMS Internet Mapping. The goal of the project is to provide Georgia with a tool to quickly determine the status of damaged structures after a hurricane. To date, Georgia and NOAA have completed a GPS- referenced shoreline inventory of all houses and structures on the four developed barrier islands of Tybee Island, Sea Island, St. Simons Island, and Jekyll Island. Digital aerial photographs, parcel data and cadastral (ownership data) have also been obtained from the counties, and the information combined in an Arcview project.
7. **Coastal Advisory Council.** GCMP has established a Coastal Advisory Council (CAC) to provide ongoing support and advice in implementation activities and to serve as another mechanism to get information o the local level. The CAC meets

quarterly to address an issue or issues as a coastal roundtable and annually to address budget and project themes.

8. **Marina Best Management Practices Manual.** The Best Environmental Management Practices for Georgia Marinas was produced to identify and promote best management practices (BMPs) that will help create a balance between economic growth with clean water, clean soil and clean air for boaters to enjoy. Effective, affordable, and user-friendly BMPs are discussed to help control, reduce, or, in some cases, eliminate the sources and effects of pollution associated with marinas. Thus, providing marina managers with the information to successfully implement and oversee BMPs pertinent to activities at their facilities is the objective of the manual.
9. **Building Program Support.** Throughout all implementation activities the GCMP has sought to expand its base of program support. Work with Federal agencies the programs that they carry out and fund has been an area of significant achievement. The Natural Resources Conservation Service noted that the level of interaction with its clients groups, who were opposed to the program at its inception, has been completely reversed. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, originally fearful of the emergence of the GCMP, but has come to appreciate the role the GCMP plays in the permitting process. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service indicates that all actions are now integrated through the emergence of the GCMP.
10. **Outreach Activities.** GCMP outreach activities include the Coastal Ark detailed above, workshops and seminars, the two-minute radio spots “Coastal Connections,” the quarterly newsletter “Georgia Sound,” and the annual Coast Fest. GCMP developed and published an educational curriculum entitled Georgia’s Wetland Treasures which provides background information to the State’s wetlands including identification, function and value. Recent workshops have been: Marine Dock Builders Seminar; Satilla River Workshop; and, Altamaha River Workshop.
11. **Fish Carcass and Fishing Gear Recycling Programs.** The GCMP has supported the Fish Carcass and Fishing Gear Recycling Programs of the Divisions’ Marine Fisheries Section. Both programs involve the users in managing their own resources. In the Fish Carcass Program, fish carcasses are placed in specific locations for pick up and analysis. The Fishing Gear recycling Program removes damaging equipment from the environment, protecting resources and the resource users.
12. **Submerged Resources Protection Planning.** Through the Georgia Coastal Management Program 309 enhancement program, side-scan sonar is being purchased to identify and catalog these significant resources. Protection of the identified resources will be accomplished through application of existing law. The GCMP has formed a working

group comprised of staff from Coastal Resources Division- Ecological Services and Marine Fisheries Sections, and the Historic Preservation Division. The group is formulating a Submerged Resources Protection and Underwater Archaeology Strategy which will identify, geo-locate, and protect such resources through the rule making authority of the Department of Natural Resources.

## C. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the significant accomplishments described above, OCRM has identified areas where the program may be improved. These evaluation findings do not contain a recommendation which takes the form of a Necessary Action and is mandatory. Five (5) recommendations take the form of Program Suggestions.

**Finding: Addressing Coastal Development Issues.** With 2,344 linear miles of coastline, Georgia's coastal area is enriched with abundant marshes, barrier islands, beaches, river corridors, maritime forests, and uplands. The Georgia coast is relatively undeveloped, due to the fact that many of Georgia's barrier islands are not easily accessible and much of the available developable land is currently managed for timber production. Pressures from increasing population and development, however, are threatening the quality of life on the coast.

**1. PROGRAM SUGGESTION.** GCMP should work with local communities to help them prepare for increased development pressures and the impact on all infrastructure demands that such pressures will necessarily require. The extent that existing or new State law and regulation may appropriately be applied to support local communities in this effort should be explored.

**Finding: Addressing Coastal Research Needs and Issues.** The GCMP embraces the framework to address a number of issues which are not currently a part of legislative or administrative directive. To address these issues, research needs to occur to define the best and most productive management approach for the Georgia coastal zone. Issues such as those surrounding ground water use and protection, gaps in State law which leave protective measures and mechanisms silent, fisheries research needs, docks and piers and hammocks need data to support decisionmaking.

**2. PROGRAM SUGGESTION.** GCMP should assess gaps in existing authorities, lack of authorities, and the need for new authorities to address emerging issues and develop a list of priorities to address those identified.

**Finding: Coordination.** Clearly one of the significant strengths of program implementation since approval of the GCMP has been the level of coordination developed in support of the Program and driven by the requirements there-in. Given this history of successful partnership development there are several opportunities for strengthened relationships. One would be in the arena of the Coastal Advisory Council, the other would be in coordination of activities with other NOAA funded programs along the Georgia Coast: Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research reserve and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary.

**3. PROGRAM SUGGESTION.** GCMP is encouraged to explore a more formal structural mechanism for the CAC. Likewise, GCMP is encouraged to work with GRNMS and SINERR to develop a coordinated approach to develop a common message of coastal resource management and resource preservation. This should be done in concert with efforts to further inform local agencies of government about resource management issues and resolutions.

**Finding: Continued Education of Local Officials.** In many respects, the accomplishments of program implementation have come because of local involvement and participation in the the GCMP, through participation on the CAC, receipt of small grants, attendance at workshops and educational briefings, or through the daily work of GCMP staff. Likewise, the issues discussed above may only be resolved by local participation, involvement, increased knowledge, and understanding. This should remain a continued effort. While the state legislative support from the coastal area could be stronger, it is clear that the local support is strong. Local officials know and use the program. One goal would be to get the word to the state delegation that the local officials strongly support the program.

**4. PROGRAM SUGGESTION.** GCMP activities to inform local governments and elected and appointed officials should be emphasized in all activities of program implementation. Priority for such activities should be a consideration of project funding.

**Finding: Information System Support.** The gathering, use, and manipulation of information is an issue. Where information exists, there is a need for someone to collate the information, maintain it and make it available to resource agencies. Likewise, all the agencies have a piece of the information puzzle. The centralized Georgia Technology Authority, has control over all computer acquisition and decisions within the State. Any joint effort involving data from local, State, and Federal sources may be affected by the decisions of an authority removed from the direct area of need.

**5. PROGRAM SUGGESTION.** The GCMP is in a position to draw the resource management agencies, educational institutions and others into a dialogue to identify a program for the development of information system support for all led by an appropriate authority or institution.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Section 312 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972, as amended, requires NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) to conduct a continuing review of the performance of States and Territories with Federally approved Coastal Management Programs. This document sets forth the evaluation findings of the Director of OCRM with respect to the Georgia Coastal Management Program (GCMP) for the period from January 1998 through April 2001. This document includes an Executive Summary, Program Review Procedures, Program Description, Accomplishments, Review Findings and Recommendations, and a Conclusion.

The recommendations made by this evaluation appear in **bold** type and follow the section of the findings in which the facts relative to the recommendation are discussed. The recommendations may be of two types:

(1) **Necessary Actions** address programmatic requirements of the CZMA regulations and of the TCMP approved by NOAA, and must be carried out by the date(s) specified. There are no Necessary Actions within this document.

(2) **Program Suggestions** denote actions which OCRM believes would improve the management and operations of the Program, but which are not mandatory at this time.

If no specific dates are given for carrying out a Program Suggestion or a Necessary Action, the State is expected to have successfully implemented the Necessary Action or Program Suggestion by the time of the next section 312 evaluation. The findings contained within this document will be considered by NOAA in making future financial assistance award decisions relative to the Georgia Coastal Management Program.



## **II. PROGRAM REVIEW PROCEDURES**

The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) evaluation staff began review of the GCMP in January 2001. This included an analysis of the approved GCMP, previous and current award documents and performance reports, correspondence relating to the GCMP, and other relevant information. The OCRM Director's Office and the Coastal Programs Division (CPD) staff coordinated to determine the issues which would become the main focus of the evaluation. The Evaluation Team analyzed the State's responses to these specific issues and used them as primary sources of information on the GCMP's operation.

The Evaluation Team gave special emphasis to the following issues:

- The effectiveness of GCMP authorities and procedures to address coastal resource needs;
- The effectiveness of monitoring and enforcing the State laws and authorities under the GCMP;
- The effectiveness of the GCMP Federal consistency process as a management tool;
- Opportunities for public participation, both formal and informal, in permitting and planning decisions under the GCMP;
- Any program changes to and impact of these changes on the GCMP; and,
- Opportunities to use educational institutions or other initiatives to develop outreach focused on building programmatic support at all levels.

John H. McLeod, Evaluation Team Leader, OCRM Director's Office; Chris Rilling of the Coastal Programs Division; Jeannie Lewis Butler, Senior Coastal Program Coordinator, Virginia Coastal Resources Management Program; and, Jean Snider Acting Deputy Director, National Centers for Coastal Ocean Science, conducted a site visit from May 21 through 25, 2001. The Evaluation Site Visit Team met with representatives of State and local governments, Federal agencies, interest group representatives, and private citizens during the site visit.

Prior to the site visit, the Evaluation staff provided written notice of the GCMP evaluation to relevant Federal agencies and provided opportunities for them to respond. A Public

Meeting was held on Wednesday, May 23 at the Coastal Resources Division Offices in Brunswick (**Appendix A** lists persons contacted in connection with the evaluation; **Appendix B** lists persons who attended the Public Meeting; **Appendix C** contains NOAA's response to written comments received.) In addition, a telephone conference was held with, and at the request of some coastal conservation and environmental groups on June 7, 2001.

The GCMP staff were instrumental in setting up meetings and arranging logistics for the evaluation site visit. Their support is gratefully acknowledged. Without GCMP staff planning and support the evaluation team could not have possibly gotten to all the sites visited.

### III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

#### A. General Background

With 2,344 linear miles of coastline, Georgia's coastal area is enriched with abundant marshes, barrier islands, beaches, river corridors, maritime forests, and uplands. The Georgia coast is relatively undeveloped, due to the fact that many of Georgia's barrier islands are not easily accessible and much of the available developable land is currently managed for timber production. Pressures from increasing population and development, however, are threatening the quality of life on the coast.

The Georgia coast is an interrelated system of productive coastal marine waters, barrier islands, coastal marshlands, rivers, and associated upland areas. It is the westernmost portion of the United States on the Atlantic seaboard, located approximately in the center of the South Atlantic Bight. The broad, gentle slope of the continental shelf stretches 95 miles off of Georgia. On the shelf, many hard and soft bottom habitats can be found. "Live bottom" areas occur naturally where limestone

outcroppings are exposed on the sea floor, allowing marine animals and plants to settle and colonize. The Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary, located approximately 15 miles east of Sapelo Island, is a natural reef community with an abundance of live bottom habitat in 60 to 70 feet of water on the continental shelf. Artificial reef communities have been created in some areas by sinking barges, World War II liberty ships, and other material that encourages reef organisms to settle and grow. The coastal marine waters off Georgia provide habitat for many oceanic birds, sea turtles, marine mammals, crustaceans, and fishes.



**Typical Georgia Coastal Wetlands**

## **B. Program Policies and Authorities**

The enforceable policies of the GCMP are included in 34 State laws. The program also includes several additional local, regional, State, and Federal programs, agencies, authorities, and commissions. Key Authorities are:

Georgia Coastal Management Act  
Coastal Marshlands Protection Act  
Shore Protection Act  
Revocable License Program

Agencies networked through memoranda of agreement are:

Department of Natural Resources  
Environmental Protection Division  
Wildlife Resources Division  
Parks and Historic Sites Division  
Historic Preservation Division  
Public Health Division  
Secretary of State  
Jekyll Island Authority  
Georgia Port Authority  
Department of Transportation  
Georgia Forestry Commission  
Public Service Commission  
Department of Community Affairs

The program manages impacts to activities which have reasonably foreseeable effects upon land use, water use, or natural resources of the coastal area. Activities subject to the management program are:

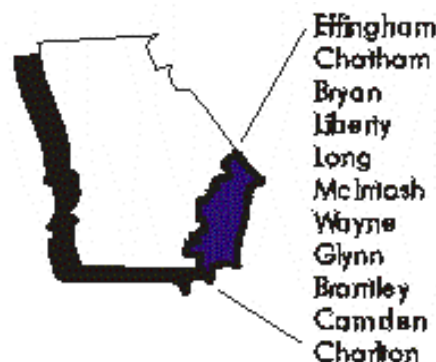
Development and Manufacturing  
Transportation Facilities  
Agriculture and Silviculture  
Recreation and Tourism  
Marine Related Facilities  
Public Service Facilities  
Fisheries, Aquaculture and Wildlife  
Dredging

The GCMP also has a role in managing shoreline erosion and planning for hazard mitigation; encouraging public and local government involvement; energy facility and shorefront access planning; protecting the national interest and ensuring that uses of regional benefit are not

excluded; and management of special areas.

### **C. Program Scope**

The Seaward boundary of Georgia's coastal area extends to the outer limits of State jurisdiction, which is three nautical miles seaward from the mean low watermark. Included within the coastal area are both waters of the State and submerged lands. Interstate boundaries include the South Carolina state border on the north and the Florida state border on the south. Georgia's coastal area boundary extends farther inland than South Carolina's. The entire state of Florida is included in the Florida coastal zone. The inland boundary of Georgia's coastal area is the political boundaries of the eleven counties. Encompassed within this boundary are all upland areas in these eleven counties, as well as all waters of the State and all submerged lands within the defined coastal area. The eleven counties described by the coastal management area contain all of the tidally influences waters of the State, which was the rationale used to determine this inland boundary.



Georgia's Coastal Boundary

### **D. Program Management**

Administratively, the GCMP is housed within the Department of Natural Resources. The Coastal Resources Division is given the authority under the Georgia Coastal Management Act to administer and manage the program and monitor its progress; make consistency determinations for Federal projects and Federal permits, licenses and assistance; and coordinate among the networked agencies. CRD also issues permits for projects under its purview.

#### IV. PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The true strength of any program lies in its supporting staff and Georgia is fortunate in this regard. It is through their efforts that the significant accomplishments documented here came to fruition. During the period of time covered by this evaluation, January 1998 through April 2001, the Georgia Coastal Management Program has addressed many coastal issues. The results detailed below would not have occurred without committed leadership and staff. Ultimately, the actions of GCMP personnel lead to the specific accomplishments detailed below.

##### **A) Building Relationships With Relevant Institutions.**

Development of a close working relationship with the research and academic communities of the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, Georgia Institute of Technology, Georgia Southern, University of Georgia Marine Extension Service, NOAA Grays Reef, Sea Grant and others, has led to a strengthening of program implementation throughout its first and formative years and provides the underpinning for future program advancement. In this relationship the scientific community has successfully taken the position of being “honest brokers” to present information in an unbiased way. This has served to bolster GCMP positions and point out areas where the program should extend more effort.

Skidaway Institute of Oceanography (SKIO) includes as major actors Georgia Institute of Technology (environmental engineering and biology), Georgia Southern (applied coastal research), University of Georgia Marine Extension Service (education and mariculture), and NOAA Grays Reef (oceanographic education and resource protection). In terms of research, SKIO focuses on climate change, sea level rise and population growth (the biggest single issue), on coastal zone issues and the way things will be in the future. General issues include: coastal erosion and flooding; microbial contamination (which has not been a great concern in the past because of the lack of events and the lack of data); toxic contaminants from existing and non-point sources [toxics and the development of biological indicators to provide total minimum daily load (TMDL) and total maximum load (TML) descriptors]; decreased dissolved oxygen; and habitat disruption or destruction. SKIO is positioned to provide scientific support to define and develop resolution/solutions of significant issues resulting from coastal development and use pressures. The University of Georgia Marine Extension Service provides education and outreach support through assistance to environmental groups and the adopt-a-river program, to county and city officials through NEMO (Non-point Education of Municipal Officials), and to students (K-12, college and adult) through its GIS project and teacher internships. Sea Grant defines its goals

as complimentary and different.

Supported by the GCMP, a developing Georgia Coastal Research Council is forming to: form partnerships between the academic community and managers; establish study groups; develop informal interactions; have biennial meetings focused on coastal issues; and incorporate science into policy decisionmaking.

## **B) Building Relationships With National Ocean Service Programs.**

In addition to the development of supportive relationships with the scientific communities above, the GCMP has evolved a close working relationship with the National Ocean Service (NOS) programs at Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) and Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve (SINERR) and the NOAA Sea Grant program. Sea Grant supports research, education and outreach and GCMP sits on project review selection panels and works to fund worthy projects that do not receive Sea Grant funding. Sea Grant is on GCMP advisory committees and GCMP sits on Sea Grant advisory committees.

Gray's Reef NMS has a close relationship with the GCMP, in part directly, in part through the Reserve, and, as noted above, in part through SKIO. It was noted that with the change in NOS structure, with the marine sanctuary program being separated from OCRM, there has been a noticeable lack of information regarding reserve and coastal management activities nationally. GCMP has provided a link for Gray's Reef NMS to such information nationally as it has maintained a relationship regarding program specific issues. Likewise the SINERR, which is a part of the parent agency of the GCMP, enjoys a close working relationship. Hampered in the recent past by the lack of a Director for the Sapelo Island Marine Institute, recent recruitment may well have resolved the issues. With each program, GCMP, Gray's Reef NMS, and SINERR, having an education component with personnel assigned to carry out education and outreach functions there is discussion regarding the development of a common message regarding resource management and protection supported by each of the programs.

## **C) Coastal Incentive Grants.**

At least 60 % of the funds received under the CZMA are passed through to local grants. Funding is to projects which both provide access to coastal resources and assures protection from improper uses or correction of environmentally negative impacts. In some cases the grants provide "seed" money to projects which will evolve over time. The Coastal Advisory Council (CAC) provides guidance and has established the theme of "coastal water-related resources" with seven focus areas of: implementation of a project identified in the environmental section of a local government's approved and adopted Local Comprehensive Plan; leading to implementation of water conservation elements of a local government's water supply management plan;

identification of impacts to coastal water quality produced by urban sprawl with emphasis of the “connecting” nature of land use decisions; identification and evaluation of potential negative water quality impacts of artificial aquifer recharge processes; development and implementation of a master drainage plan emphasizing protection of coastal water quality and preservation of natural flow; evaluation of the impact of chemical applications on coastal water quality and alternative methods of achieving desired results; and implementation of erosion and sedimentation regulations at the local level. A full listing of projects funded under the GCMP may be found at [www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/coastal](http://www.dnr.state.ga.us/dnr/coastal).

Several small grant projects visited during the site visit included:

City of St. Mary’s waterfront park and boat ramp funded under Section 306A. Between a small two pier marina and the public wharf, a linear waterfront park has been constructed. Adjacent to the wharf, funding was provided to redevelop boating access by addition of a pier.

McKay River Boat Ramp, the enhancement of an existing boat where funding was maximized by enhancing existing sites and access which is in need of upgrade or additional support. In this instance a public ramp was enhanced, parking provided, an information board constructed, and land was consolidated.

Massengale Park where three \$25,000 projects provided clean up of existing access to the ocean with a parking lot adjacent to the road and another area of parking closer to the beach, a pathway through the park, dune walkover and handicapped access.

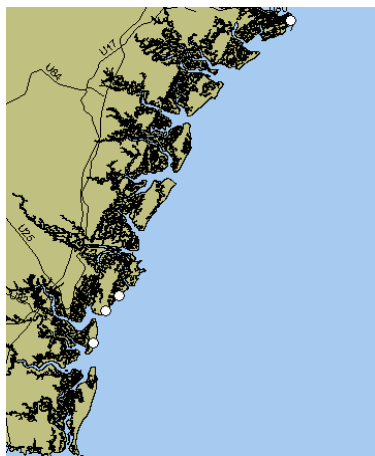
#### **D) Public Health Monitoring.**

Although not a water quality management agency, the GCMP has developed a water quality monitoring program which includes 118 sites covering all sounds and rivers. In 2001, 50 additional sites were added to be comprehensively monitored to a standard set of criteria with the goal of developing trend data. The intent of this effort is to fill in the void of the lack of data so the the GCMP can carry out its own mission. One benefit of the information is that beach data is available on the WEB to identify beach closures, provide general information regarding island beaches, and give directions to the beaches and suggestions for their enjoyment. The information may be accessed at [www.cleanup.org](http://www.cleanup.org) on earthnet 911 and is updated weekly.

On accessing the entrance to the data a general map of Georgia’s coast with prompt buttons to the beaches is provided with a welcoming explanation, coupled with other search mechanisms. This is a partnership effort between the Surfrider Foundation, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division, and Earth's 911 which provides



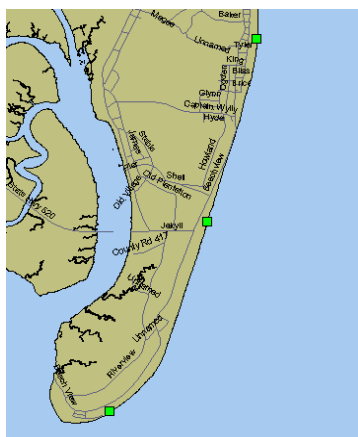
specific information regarding the current water quality conditions at the local beaches. Earth's 911 provides information generated and uploaded directly by local government agencies.



Generic coastal map from the WEB page

Like most of the state's coastline, Georgia's beaches are protected by many natural and beautiful sea oat-covered sand dunes. When visiting the beach environment along Georgia's coast, keep a couple of things in mind on how each of us can play a role in the preservation of this critical natural resource. Always use a designated access ramp to a beach to prevent any further deterioration to the fragile dune systems and the native vegetation. Also, chances are good that when visiting Georgia's beaches you may encounter many forms of wildlife. Whether you find a sea turtle laying in the sand dunes at night or see a pelican eating its catch on the beach, remember to treat all of the critters with the utmost respect. Enjoy Georgia's coastal environment and remember to do your part in trying to keep our beaches clean and beautiful.

### Associated Text to Entrance Map

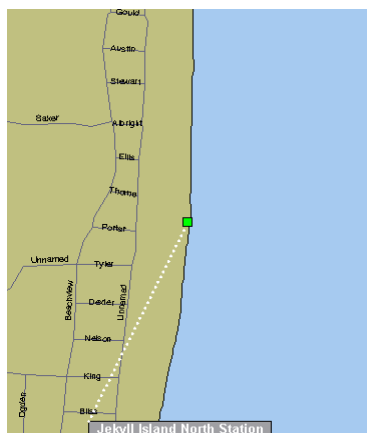


First Stage Location Map to Jekyll Island

#### Jekyll Island

Probably the most scenic of all the barrier islands with a public beach, Jekyll is famous for its ten miles of continuous beautiful beaches. Jekyll residents lease their property from the Jekyll Island Authority and because of this many of the original stands of live oak and pine trees still thrive throughout the island. When visiting the island, drive with caution to avoid the many forms of wildlife that abound in the wooded and marsh environments.

### First Stage Information



Second Stage Location Map

#### Jekyll Island North Station

Beach Water Quality Status is Open Last Time Local Agency Updated Information 7/30/2001 6:51:00 AM

Located on Porter Street off of North Beachview Drive, this site has an access ramp but it is not public. To access the north end of Jekyll beaches, use the Jekyll Fishing Pier access and walk around the north end of the island to the east side. While there is plenty of parking, the walk to the east side could be a long one depending on your destination. Try to plan your walk around low tide when the majority of the beach is exposed. This station is open for swimming and other water recreation.

### Second Stage Information

In addition to the provision of information to the public, the GCMP has developed an active monitoring program. Recognizing that Georgia has lacked a cohesive program to monitor coastal water quality the GCMP established a program consisting of five separate water quality monitoring projects for five separate programs: Shellfish; *Pfiesteria* and harmful algal events; Nutrients; coastal 2000; and Beaches. The program samples 168 sites along the Georgia coast which stretches about 100 linear miles and includes 90 miles of beaches and approximately 2,500 miles of estuarine shoreland.

#### **E) Georgia's Coastal ARK.**

Sailing the roadways of coastal Georgia in a flurry of environmental activity is Georgia's very own and very special CoastalArk. The only one of its kind in Georgia, this 30 foot mobile classroom uses the power of state-of-the-art technology to bring ecological information and outreach efforts to coastal residents of the Peach State. The Ark is funded by a grant through the United States Environmental Protection Agency. Housed at the Department of Natural Resources Coastal Resources Division in Brunswick, Georgia and staffed by biologists, the Ark is set to visit communities in the eleven county service area which is served by the Coastal Resources Division.

Concerned with increasing public awareness and knowledge of environmental issues facing coastal Georgia, the CoastalArk uses its mobile format to bring environmental issues directly to the public. Teaching people how to become involved in environmental issues and what actions to take concerning matters impacting our natural resources are main objectives of this project on wheels. Looking to local government and community groups as the first line of defense for protecting wetlands and the environment, the CoastalArk uses educational activities and programs to promote and encourage informed and responsible decision making concerning the natural resources of coastal Georgia.

With the primary mission to preserve and protect Georgia wetlands, which provide vital habitat for animals, birds, fish and plant life, the CoastalArk uses a variety of methods and means to reach different sectors of the public with its messages. From wetlands-related zoning education for local governmental officials, to permitting requirement seminars for contractors, to educational



Georgia's Coastal Ark - Inside and Out

programs for school children, the goal of the CoastalArk is to strike a balance between economic development and conservation of the state's fragile coastal ecosystem. By providing wetland technical assistance, outreach activities, training opportunities and comprehensive educational experiences the Ark utilizes a gamut of strategies and resources to achieve its mission. Equipped with video equipment and monitors, computers, scientific and technical components and a warehouse of educational information, the Ark is ready to bring environmental issues to the forefront of the public's mind.

#### **F) Coastal Hazards Information System (COHIS).**

The GCMP has been working with NOAA, Coastal Programs Division to develop a Coastal Hazards Information System (COHIS) - a disaster planning and response system which uses the latest applications of Geographic Information System (GIS), Global Positioning System (GPS) and ArcIMS Internet Mapping. The goal of the project is to provide Georgia with a tool to quickly determine the status of damaged structures after a hurricane. To date, Georgia and NOAA have completed a GPS- referenced shoreline inventory of all houses and structures on the four developed barrier islands of Tybee Island, Sea Island, St. Simons Island, and Jekyll Island. Digital aerial photographs, parcel data and cadastral (ownership data) have also been obtained from the counties, and the information combined in an Arcview project.

The COHIS project was presented at the annual Governor's Severe Weather Conference on Jekyll Island in May, 2001 and meetings have been held with Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA) and FEMA to clearly articulate the role of GCMP in the event of a hurricane. COHIS will ultimately be designed to provide an interactive, internet-based GIS mapping system that will enable damage assessment crews to rapidly and accurately map damaged areas and share the information with the GEMA, FEMA, NOAA, and the public. The Disaster Field Office (DFO) will thus be able to communicate its latest damage assessments in real-time. Partners in the project have included Glynn and Chatham Counties, Georgia, Glynn County GIS, and Savannah Area GIS.



Providing Ground Truth to Mapped Structures on the Georgia Coast

#### **G) Coastal Advisory Council.**

GCMP has established a Coastal Advisory Council (CAC) to provide ongoing support and advice in implementation activities and to serve as another mechanism to get information on the local level. The CAC meets quarterly to address an issue or issues as a coastal roundtable and

annually to address budget and project themes. The quarterly roundtables have had speakers from the U.S. Geological Survey, the Georgia Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Division, and Green Space to discuss resource issues associated with their specific areas. As discussed above the CAC provides guidance to the Coastal Incentive Grants Program through establishing the theme of “coastal water-related resources” with its seven focus areas.

The origins of the CAC lie in the 25-member Coastal Zone Advisory Committee appointed by the Governor in 1992 to provide a mechanism for public participation and input during program development. At the end of the two-year appointment period the Committee ceased to exist. In order to fill the void, the Commissioner of the Department of Natural Resources appointed a new committee; the CAC. As the draft GCMP was presented to the public, the CAC provided support to the public input process and members submitted written comments. With Program approval the role of the CAC evolved to provide support to implementation efforts. During the site visit, the potential to further the involvement of the CAC was discussed and the need to establish more stability through a more formal structural mechanism was recognized. In addition, GCMP is exploring the institution of a training program for participants as a vehicle to expand its base of local participants.

#### **H) Marina Best Management Practices Manual.**

The Best Environmental Management Practices for Georgia Marinas was produced to identify and promote best management practices (BMPs) that will help create a balance between economic growth with clean water, clean soil and clean air for boaters to enjoy. By U.S. Marina standards, Georgia’s coastal marinas are small, but the number of facilities, typical marina size, and intensity of use is projected to increase at an unprecedented rate over the next 20 years. Effective, affordable, and user-friendly BMPs will help control, reduce, or, in some cases, eliminate the sources and effects of pollution associated with marinas. Thus, providing marina managers with the information to successfully implement and oversee BMPs pertinent to activities at their facilities is the objective of the manual.

The manual provides the information and example programs necessary for marina managers to understand and implement BMPs for a wide range of pollutants in: marina siting, design, and construction; solid and liquid waste (including hazardous materials); fuel, oil, and other hydrocarbons; stormwater runoff; and, vessel discharge of sewage. Within each area, consideration is made to activities that traditionally occur within marinas, including winterizing, fueling, storing, maintaining, and servicing boats. For each area and associated activity (for example, storage and containment, spill protection, disposal/recycling, source control, education for employees, customers, and contractors, signs and contracts) BMPs are discussed.

## **I) Building Program Support.**

Throughout all implementation activities the GCMP has sought to expand its base of program support. Work with Federal agencies the programs that they carry out and fund has been an area of significant achievement. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS) noted that the level of interaction with its clients groups, who were opposed to the program at its inception, has been completely reversed. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), originally fearful of the emergence of the GCMP, but has come to appreciate the role the GCMP plays in the permitting process. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) indicates that all actions are now integrated through the emergence of the GCMP.

At the time of GCMP approval NCRS clients were opposed to the program but there has now been a complete reversal of opinion and they would not like to see the program challenged. GCMP has helped leverage the NCRS program to support the farmers and to leverage other funds. Specific projects include: the Erosion and Sedimentation Control Workshop; publication of *How to Protect Natural Resources on Construction Sites*, a builders guide which discusses erosion control, protective vegetation, stone check dams, drainage, construction debris, energy conservation with trees, saving trees and restoring vegetation, planting trees, planning and scheduling.

Originally fearful of the emergence of the GCMP as another actor to deal with in an already “clouded landscape of governmental entities involved in permitting, the Corps is now experiencing program administration being carried out seamlessly from previous experience as a result of having the GCMP in place. The Savannah District covers the Georgia watershed to the coast from Savannah with some responsibilities in the South Carolina part of the Savannah River, to the St. Mary’s at the Florida border. It also includes military facilities in South Carolina and North Carolina. A reduction in the time of processing permits and in the levels of coordination required is a dividend resulting from having the GCMP in place.

FWS, which, prior to GCMP approval, saw a number of different State agencies, or parts thereof, involved at various points and with various interests now sees all actions as integrated through the emergence of the GCMP. FWS and GCMP share a memorandum of understanding on categorical exclusion for 306A projects for certain categories and when certain tests are met.

## **J) Outreach Activities.**

GCMP outreach activities include the Coastal Ark detailed above, workshops and seminars, the two-minute radio spots “Coastal Connections,” the quarterly newsletter “Georgia Sound,” and the annual Coast Fest. GCMP developed and published an educational curriculum entitled Georgia’s Wetland Treasures which provides background information to the State’s wetlands including identification, function and value. Recent workshops have been: Marine Dock Builders Seminar; Satilla River Workshop; and, Altamaha River Workshop.

Workshop presentations were organized and presented by GCMP in conjunction with local governments and each workshop was tailored for the specific county, township or audience. Technical information was provided on basic ecological, management, and procedural issues central to the management of coastal Georgia including: presentations and discussions on salt-water intrusion, land-use and vegetation patterns, nutrient cycling in the benthos, water sampling in the tidal areas, and rivers from a fisherman's point of view. Information on dock permitting, common problems associated with dock builders and regulatory staff, and a hands-on field trip to review marshland vegetation and dock construction sites were also part of the presentations. The workshops allowed scientists, researchers, lay people, fishermen, and the general public the opportunity to discuss issues in an open forum setting.

Each year the GCMP hosts Georgia's largest organized celebration of the State's coastal natural resources - CoastFest. This one-day celebration is designed to both excite and educate visitors about the natural coastal world. Event exhibitors offer an array of interactive exhibits and displays where festival goers can take advantage of a wide variety of activities such as building bird houses, meeting live snakes and turtles, learning about shells, dolphins, manatees and sea turtles, and many others. In 1998 over 3,500 visitors took part and in 1999 and 2000 over 4,000 participated.



CoastFest Participants in the "Big Tent"

Annually new features are included such as WeeBee the 70 foot plastic whale, an environmental trivia contest with prizes at the CoastalArk, Sapelo basket making demonstrations, a county-wide art contest leading to a winning selection which is sported on the CoastFest "T" shirt, the Keep Georgia Beautiful 20<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration Bus, an electric vehicle, native plant landscaping demonstrations, free family photos, a shark mascot and live critters of all kinds. Other attractions include live musket demonstrations, touch tanks with live sea creatures, a sea turtle presentation, live raptor and reptile shows from Georgia Southern University and tours of the Research Vessel the ANNA and other boats.



CoastFest "T"

Coastal Connections is a series of two-minute radio spots which explore a wide variety of topics affecting the Georgia coast. Topics ranged from whales to hurricanes to sea island cotton. GCMP staff, in association with Georgia's Sea Grant College Program and radio station WUGA in Athens, developed the public awareness program. The program provides Georgia residents a new way to stay informed of wildlife issues, natural resources, and the history of the coastal area.

## **K) Fish Carcass and Fishing Gear Recycling Programs.**

The GCMP has supported the Fish Carcass and Fishing Gear Recycling Programs of the Divisions' Marine Fisheries Section. Both programs involve the users in managing their own resources. In the Fish Carcass Program, fish carcasses are placed in specific locations for pick up and analysis. The Fishing Gear recycling Program removes damaging equipment from the environment, protecting resources and the resource users.

### *Finfish Carcass Recovery Program*

The Finfish Carcass Recovery Program was created in 1997 to involve anglers in the process of managing Georgia's saltwater recreational fishery. Chest freezers are placed near the fish cleaning stations at public marinas along Georgia's coast. Each freezer is clearly marked to provide information about its purpose and supplied with plastic bags, information cards, and pens. Filleted carcasses, with the head and tail intact, along with a completed angler information card, are placed in the freezer. The freezers are checked every week during the peak fishing season and biweekly during the off months. The frozen fish carcasses are returned to the Coastal Regional Headquarters where they are processed. Biologists determine the species, length, and sex before removing the otoliths, or ear bones, which are used to determine the age of the fish.

To date, approximately 7,200 carcasses have been processed for biological data. The most common species collected are spotted seatrout and red drum. The data from donated fish is combined with data gathered by other methods such as the creel survey and used to determine the age structure of the fish population harvested by anglers. This information is critical for stock assessments and other analyses used to determine the health of sportfish populations. The recovery program has the added benefit of reducing fish waste in marinas which sometime lack adequate flushing. Water quality and aesthetic appeal of the marina basin is thereby improved.

### *Crab Trap Recycling Program*

The Marine Fisheries section is currently working with the University of Georgia Marine Extension Service to expand the successful crab trap recycling program in coastal Georgia thanks to a two year Coastal Incentive Grant administered by the Georgia Coastal Management Program. With the grant, the program was expanded this spring to include the shrimping industry with recycling locations for crab traps at shrimp docks. This fall the recycle program will turn its focus to shrimp gear. The Coastal Resources Division will work with the Marine Extension Service to recycle deteriorated shrimp nets and worn out cables from Georgia's coastal docks. Since 1996 the crab trap recycling program has: controlled more than 5,000 traps; recycled nearly 90% of those traps; and, collected more than 13 tons of traps and associated gear.

## **L) Submerged Resources Protection Planning.**

With the population increase of approximately 25% in the past decade, Georgia faces significant demands upon resource managers to provide habitat enhancements to increase



recreational opportunities. Residents and visitors alike desire increased contact with sensitive coastal resources. The public wants enhanced recreational fishing opportunities through artificially constructed reefs and fish aggregating devices, public access to waterways and family-friendly waterfront development. In response, Georgia's Coastal Resources Division of the Department of Natural Resources has initiated a variety of projects including: nearshore, beach and inshore artificial reef construction projects; several boat ramp, pier and access projects; and the Darien Waterfront Development and Improvement Project. Unfortunately, coastal waters most suitable for such construction and other development often contain significant submerged cultural and archaeological sites. The Coastal Resources Division had no means for conducting sufficient underwater surveys and no process in place to identify cultural and historically important subsurface resources. Without this process, the risk of devastating impacts to submerged sites of archaeological importance is great.

Through the Georgia Coastal Management Program 309 enhancement program, side-scan sonar is being purchased to identify and catalog these significant resources. Protection of the identified resources will be accomplished through application of existing law. Section 12-3-80 of the Official Code of Georgia (OCGA) defines Submerged Cultural Resources as:

***“all prehistoric and historic sites, ruins, artifacts, treasure, treasure-trove, and shipwrecks or vessels and their cargo or tackle which have remained on the bottom for more than 50 years, and similar sites and objects found in the Atlantic Ocean within the three-mile territorial limit of the state or within its navigable waters.”***

That Code Section gives title to, and the exclusive right to the State of Georgia for investigation, survey, and recovery of all such submerged cultural resources. The Code Section further declares that:

***“the custodian of all submerged cultural resources shall be the Department of Natural Resources. The Board of Natural Resources is empowered to promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to preserve, survey, protect, and recover such underwater properties and are necessary for the effective administration of this part.”***

The GCMP has formed a working group comprised of staff from Coastal Resources Division- Ecological Services and Fisheries Sections, and the Historic Preservation Division. The group is formulating a Submerged Resources Protection and Underwater Archaeology Strategy. This project will provide a process through interagency cooperation which will identify, geo-locate, and protect such resources through the rule making authority of the Department of Natural Resources. When fully implemented, the Submerged Cultural Resources Strategy will provide significant benefits to the public trust resources of the Georgia and will also result in improved reef site selection and project success monitoring.



## V. REVIEW FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM) finds that the GCMP is adhering to its approved coastal management program; implementing and enforcing the GCMP in a satisfactory manner; and adhering to the programmatic terms of the NOAA financial assistance awards. The State continues to address national coastal management needs identified in CZMA Section 303 (2) (A) through (K).

### A) Addressing Coastal Development Issues.

With 2,344 linear miles of coastline, Georgia's coastal area is enriched with abundant marshes, barrier islands, beaches, river corridors, maritime forests, and uplands. The Georgia coast is relatively undeveloped, due to the fact that many of Georgia's barrier islands are not easily accessible and much of the available developable land is currently managed for timber production. Pressures from increasing population and development, however, are threatening the quality of life on the coast.

There will be infrastructure demands as well as resource protection demands to preserve the integrity of the coastal area that is drawing the new development in the first place. Significant development will create demands for ancillary services such as increased and better roads, increased social services and structures to house those services, increased police and fire protection, more health facilities, more schools, and more commerce. While all of this indicates a vibrant and growing economy, the need to address the land and water issues in advance allows for local governments to be in the best position to react responsibly as the population of an area grows. To address development issues GCMP has funded several local projects dealing with infrastructure needs. Likewise, work with and by the Skidaway Institute of Oceanography has positioned the scientific community to provide scientific support to define and develop resolution of or solutions for significant issues as a result of coastal development and use pressures. Nevertheless, little work has been done to address the infrastructure issues and needs and a lot needs to be done.

A community needs assessment survey, which polled 85 city and county government elected officials in all eleven coastal counties indicated important issues to be the issues which relate to water quality and use, wetlands protection, regional population growth and emergency and comprehensive planning. With the recognition of need, local governments need to be supported in the development of appropriate responses. For instance, there are no vegetation control mechanisms such as a buffer of so many feet from a coastal stream, a technique used by all coastal states as part of a suite of tools to protect coastal water quality and habitat - this may be

needed in the future. Another example is the emerging issue of docks and piers. Single family homes are exempt from some controls to block access but must meet certain design and environmental standards. Marinas have stringent development standards and ongoing management oversight. However, there is no mandate to look at the cumulative impact of such development. GCMP may find it useful to research how other coastal programs have dealt with the issue.

GCMP has recently expanded its support to local governments with the employment of two new staff members to work in the coastal counties to identify issues and needs and then work with the municipalities to resolve the issues. It is recognized that this is a lengthy process and the goal is the identification of at least one individual or organization within each county with which to work. The mission of the operations program is to build an environmental conscience on the coast. The technical assistants are field agents for the GCMP and are responsible for developing positive relationships with local government officials, resource managers and other constituents at the local level.

## **PROGRAM SUGGESTION**

**1) GCMP should work with local communities to help them prepare for increased development pressures and the impact on all infrastructure demands that such pressures will necessarily require. The extent that existing or new State law and regulation may appropriately be applied to support local communities in this effort should be explored.**

### **B) Addressing Coastal Research Needs and Issues.**

The GCMP embraces the framework to address a number of issues which are not currently a part of legislative or administrative directive. To address these issues, research needs to occur to define the best and most productive management approach for the Georgia coastal zone. Issues such as those surrounding ground water use and protection, gaps in State law which leave protective measures and mechanisms silent, fisheries research needs, docks and piers and hammocks need data to support decisionmaking.

Specific examples include the need to study the impact of the damming of small streams to offset water needs. In this instance the Department of Agriculture is identifying money to allow landowners affected by drought to dam small coastal streams to establish on-site water supplies. While the impact may be minimal, the regulations are not in place to deal with irrigation dams should they become a residual issue related to the ongoing drought. Likewise, there is a need for

marine pathology and disease research - the community does not have the capability to respond or analyze outbreaks. While this has yet to be a problem it may only be being forestalled by the drought conditions that have prevailed for the past three years.

There are, after several years of program implementation, areas which may now be identified as gaps in State law such as the issues surrounding marsh hammocks or creation of a requirement for monitoring shallow wells (which are currently not even surveyed or platted) or protection of sand dunes (though Tybee City has adopted a protective ordinance using CZM moneys). It should be noted that a public body has been convened to address the resource impacts and the regulatory needs associated with development of the Georgia's hammocks but this group is addressing only one of several coastal threats and limitations of existing practices to deal with them. Clearly the GCMP should consider the development over time of more authorities than it currently enjoys in areas such as marsh hammocks, water resources, and cumulative impacts; all of which will take a change in the legislature which can only be brought about by education and outreach.

With regard to fisheries research the capability in DNR is limited. It has not been able to support good research, particularly for recreational fisheries. In the university setting there have been fish scientists employed and conducted research for short periods, but this has been severely hampered by the lack of research money available to support their work. One result is that there is no capability to deal with essential fish habitat issues or to react. There are also issues related to non-point source where the poultry industry and its environmental impacts are an emerging issue of significance. One of the needs is to analyze the existing water quality data, which has been entered into a database - the figures need to be "crunched" to see where problems exist.

## **PROGRAM SUGGESTION**

**2) GCMP should assess gaps in existing authorities, lack of authorities, and the need for new authorities to address emerging issues and develop a list of priorities to address those identified.**

### **C) Coordination**

Clearly one of the significant strengths of program implementation since approval of the GCMP has been the level of coordination developed in support of the Program and driven by the requirements there-in. Given this history of successful partnership development there are several opportunities for strengthened relationships. One would be in the arena of the Coastal Advisory Council, the other would be in coordination of activities with other NOAA funded programs along the Georgia Coast: Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research reserve and Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary.

It was noted earlier that “During the site visit, the potential to further the involvement of the CAC was discussed and the need to establish more stability through a more formal structural mechanism was recognized.” Clearly the CAC has been a supportive element of program application and has served to validate procedural steps as it has served to provide for an enhanced understanding of the GCMP in general. Given this success, the structural arrangements that have evolved should be reviewed with an intent to obtain increased local involvement and participation. It might also prove useful to revisit the purposes for the CAC and provide greater definition and structure so that participating members are clear regarding their roles and responsibilities.

While Gray’s Reef NMS has a close working relationship with the GCMP, in part directly, in part through the SINERR, and in part through SKIO, neither group has taken advantage of working together to the extent that they could have. Each has a unique element of the overall coastal zone area which provides its mission, be it the deeper waters of the reef, the near shore waters of the coast, the estuarine waters of Sapelo, or the land and water interface of the coast. At the same time each shares in its mission to provide for the protection and appropriate use of its resources. In such a situation, a common theme could be developed and promoted by each group that assures a common message about the significance of the coast, its use and protection.

## **PROGRAM SUGGESTION**

**3) GCMP is encouraged to explore a more formal structural mechanism for the CAC. Likewise, GCMP is encouraged to work with GRNMS and SINERR to develop a coordinated approach to develop a common message of coastal resource management and resource preservation. This should be done in concert with efforts to further inform local agencies of government about resource management issues and resolutions.**

### **D) Continued Education of Local Officials.**

In many respects, the accomplishments of program implementation have come because of local involvement and participation in the the GCMP, through participation on the CAC, receipt of small grants, attendance at workshops and educational briefings, or through the daily work of GCMP staff. Likewise, the issues discussed above may only be resolved by local participation, involvement, increased knowledge, and understanding. This should remain a continued effort. While the state legislative support from the coastal area could be stronger, it is clear that the local support is strong. Local officials know and use the program. One goal would be to get the word to the state delegation that the local officials strongly support the program.

In this regard the two new staff working in the 11 coastal counties represent a good first step. However, the issues go beyond positive relationships to engendering an understanding

regarding the impact of the local decision on the overall protection and appropriate use of resources. This indicates the need for ongoing education and outreach to provide the tools and knowledges needed to aid the local decisionmaker. It also indicates the need to provide ongoing support for local initiatives which are directed toward the informed and wise development of ordinances, plans, and procedures to carry out informed resource use decisions.

## **PROGRAM SUGGESTION**

**4) GCMP activities to inform local governments and elected and appointed officials should be emphasized in all activities of program implementation. Priority for such activities should be a consideration of project funding.**

### **E) Information System Support.**

The gathering, use, and manipulation of information is an issue. Where information exists, there is a need for someone to collate the information, maintain it and make it available to resource agencies. Likewise, all the agencies have a piece of the information puzzle. It is recognized that in some cases, such as NCRS, information is available only to a lesser extent (NCRS is in the process of getting soil surveys, but some counties data has no more detail than “wet,” “damp,” and “dry,” and two coastal counties have no soils data at all.) The centralized Georgia Technology Authority, has control over all computer acquisition and decisions within the State. Any joint effort involving data from local, State, and Federal sources may be affected by the decisions of an authority removed from the direct area of need. To add to the mix of those involved, Georgia Technology Authority, which has control over all computer acquisition and decisions within the state. Georgia Southern recently received a \$34 million grant to develop an Information Technology program (which, in part would be a program of education, not of practice.)

## **PROGRAM SUGGESTION**

**5) The GCMP is in a position to draw the resource management agencies, educational institutions and others into a dialogue to identify a program for the development of information system support for all led by an appropriate authority or institution.**

**F) Federal Consistency.**

The Federal Consistency process is being carried out appropriately. A brochure *Does Your Federally Permitted, Funded, or Direct Activity Require Federal Consistency with Georgia's Coastal Management Program?* is available explaining what Federal consistency certification and Federal consistency determinations are, identifying Federal permits and licenses and programs requiring Federal consistency certification and listing direct Federal activities which require consistency determinations.

During the first few years of program implementation attention was directed to letting the Federal agencies know that Georgia had a program and could exercise Federal consistency. One observed example was the planned instillation of a barge wharf at a U.S. Fish and Wildlife property pier. While the construction was over State owned bottom lands (an issue contested by F&W), the State used Federal consistency to halt the proposed development because the use was inconsistent with the GCMP. At this point approximately 100 determinations are made each year. The coordinator follows a Federal consistency permit checklist which defines the GCMP enforceable policies. This also serves as an additional notice to a State agency that a proposed activity needs a "more intense" level of review beyond that of State compliance.

**G) Port of Savannah lands in South Carolina.**

An issue surrounding lands owned by the Port of Savannah, but within the State of South Carolina was discussed during the review. The Savannah Port lands in South Carolina are for spoil and are basically marsh and spoil sites. Jasper County, SC, has determined that the lands are suitable for development for lightering and has condemned the property. However, the issue goes beyond the condemnation of the property - there are a number of resource protection issues in SC and the project is not supported by the SC Governor or the South Carolina coastal management program. Likewise, there are also the economic issues regarding the effect of the new facility on the Charleston Harbor and the Port of Savannah.

**H) Sunset Legislation.**

The GCMP operates under "sunset legislation" which requires the tri-annual review of the program and its justification for continuation. Recently the GCMP completed the required report in accord with the law and will seek re-approval this legislative session. It should be noted that the sunset legislation was one element that swung the support for program approval on the part of the state and a number of coastal users who were not sure the program would meet their needs. However, it is clear that the GCMP has proven that it should be considered a part of Georgia government and should be afforded the opportunity to exercise more long term direction than the three years accorded by the law (the next review is 2004). Sunset legislation should be lifted.

## **I) Forestry Issues.**

There are 3 million acres in the coastal zone in silvaculture. Voluntary “Best Management Practices” (BMPs) have been adopted and the industry is “self-policing.” There is every indication that the larger concerns fully incorporate BMPs, to different degrees of detail. There have also been instances where a larger concern assures that smaller concerns from which they purchase products follow BMPs by establishing that they will not buy the smaller firms product if BMPs are not followed. This does establish where issue lies - the small land owner who may not have the knowledge, or the “where-with-all” to apply BMPs. GCMP money has supported Soil and Water Management District workshops that targeted the small owner to educate them on BMPs and the environmental impacts of tree farming practices.

## VI. CONCLUSION

Based on OCRM's review of the federally approved Georgia Coastal Management Program and the criteria at 15 CFR 928.5(a)(3), I find that Georgia is adhering to its federally approved coastal management program. Further advances in coastal management implementation will occur as the State addresses the program suggestions contained herein.

These evaluation findings contain five (5) recommendations which are program suggestions that the State should address before the next regularly scheduled program evaluation and which are not mandatory at this time. Program suggestions that OCRM must repeat in subsequent evaluations, however, may be elevated to necessary actions (which must be acted upon within specific time frames or financial assistance may be jeopardized).

This is a programmatic evaluation of the GCMP that may have implications regarding the State's financial assistance award(s). However, it does not make any judgements on, or replace any financial audit(s) related to, the allocability of any costs incurred.

12/27/2001

*Signed*

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Date

Charles N. Ehler, Acting Director



**Georgia Coastal Management Program  
312 Evaluation**

PERSONS CONTACTED DURING THE EVALUATION

Lonice C. Barrett	Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
Duane Harris	Director, Coastal Resources Division (CRD), DNR
Stuart Stevens	Chief, Ecological Services Division (ESD), CRD, DNR
Susan Shipman	Chief, Marine Fisheries Section, CRD, DNR
Phillip Flournoy	Program Manager, ESD, CRD, DNR
Kelie Matrangos	ESD, CRD, DNR
Rhonda Knight	ESD, CRD, DNR
Tom Miller	ESD, CRD, DNR
Sgt. Billy Partridge	ESD, CRD, DNR
Cindy Gregory	ESD, CRD, DNR
Nancy Butler	ESD, CRD, DNR
Lea King	ESD, CRD, DNR
Beth Turner	ESD, CRD, DNR
Janet Evans	ESD, CRD, DNR
Jim Seymour	ESD, CRD, DNR
Tami Morris	ESD, CRD, DNR
Brooks Good	ESD, CRD, DNR
Paulette Crawford	ESD, CRD, DNR
Buddy Sullivan	Director, Sapelo Island National Estuarine research Reserve
Mac Rawson	Georgia Sea Grant
Dick Lee	Skidaway Institute of Oceanography (SKIO)
Jack Blanton	SKIO
Herb Windom	SKIO
Julie Amft	SKIO
Clark Alexander	SKIO
Keith Maruya	SKIO
Merryl Alber	UGA Marine Sciences
Keith W. Gates	Georgia Sea Grant, University of Georgia (UGA)
Randall Walker	UGA Marine Extension
Jim Henry	Georgia Southern Coastal Geological Lab
Reed Bohne	Manager, Gray's Reef National Marine Sanctuary (NMS)
Alessandra Score	Gray's Reef NMS
David A. Ferrell	Natural Resources Conservation Service

Greg R. Masson  
Bill Bailey

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

James Holland

Altamaha River Keeper

Pete Waller  
Dan Hawthorne  
Tom Joyner  
Don White  
Luther Jones

Georgia Resource Conservation and Development Council  
Soil and Water Conservation District Chairman  
Soil and Water Conservation District  
Coordinator, Soil and Water Conservation District  
Coordinator, Soil and Water Conservation District

#### June 7, 2001 Conference Call Participants

Chris DeScherer  
Patty McIntosh  
Dave Kyler  
Hal Wright  
Ben Brewton  
Don Stack  
Chris Rilling  
John McLeod  
Stuart Stevens

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**Georgia Coastal Management Program  
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**PERSONS ATTENDING THE PUBLIC MEETING**

The Public Meeting was held on Wednesday, May 23, 2001 at 7:00 PM in Division of Coastal Resources Offices in Brunswick.

Attendees:	David Kyler*	Center for a Sustainable Coast
	Stuart Stevens	Georgia Coastal Management Program (GCMP)
	Duane Harris	GCMP
	Kevin Brady	GCMP
	Phillip Flournoy	GCMP
	Fred Hay	GCMP
	Jill Huntington	GCMP
	Dominic Guidagnolo	GCMP
	Jan Mackinnon	GCMP
	Jeannie Butler	Evaluation Team
	Jean Snider	Evaluation Team
	Chris Rilling	Evaluation Team
	John McLeod	Evaluation Team

\* Spoke at the Public Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.. The meeting was concluded at 8:00 PM.

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**Georgia Coastal Management Program  
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WRITTEN COMMENTS RECEIVED AND RESPONSE

June 22, 2001

Ben Brewton, Chairman  
The Coastal Environmental Organization of Georgia, Inc.

Used minutes of June 7, 2001 telephone conference call developed by Stuart Stevens as comments. These minutes are part of the official record of the evaluation and are on file at OCRM. Issues discussed in the telephone conservation are addressed within these findings both in terms of accomplishments and as findings with recommendations.

Christopher K. DeScherer  
Southern Environmental Law Center

Comment: Georgia is failing to implement the Coastal Management Program approved by the Secretary of Commerce

Response: The specifics of this issue are currently the subject of litigation between the commenter and the DNR and will be best addressed through that channel.

Comment: Georgia is failing to meet the coastal management needs identified by Congress in the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Response: The needs identified in the CZMA are, by definition, conflicting. The CZMA calls for a balanced approach to resource use and protection and programs are in place to strike such a balance, not single out one or several needs as opposed to or above others. The specific issues identified are being addressed by GCMP implementation as discussed within these findings both in terms of accomplishments and as findings with recommendations.

Comment: Georgia is failing to comply with the notice provision required by the Coastal Zone Management Act and accompanying regulations.

Response: The crux of the comment is more that the CRD did not specifically contact the Southern Environmental Law Center, though CRD did more that meet

the requirements of the regulations in notifying the public of the evaluation site visit through publishing the notice of public meeting in a local newspaper of coastal distribution, specific notice to members of its Coastal Advisory Committee (which includes the coastal conservation and environmental groups) and in its newsletter. This effort more than meets regulatory requirements and the requirements of the CZMA. The CZMA and its regulations does not require a program to single out any one organization for preferential treatment in providing notice to the public.